

collectors, the best analysts, the best linguists. We will give them the training they need and the compensation they deserve.

There have been times here in America when our intelligence services were held in suspicion and even contempt. Now, when we face this new war, we know how much we need them. And for their dedication and for their service, America is grateful.

We're also grateful to you, the students of the Citadel. Your uniforms symbolize a tradition of honor and sacrifice, renewed in your own lives. Many of you will enter our military, taking your place in the war against terror. That struggle may continue for many years, and it may bring great costs. But you will have chosen a great calling at a crucial hour for our Nation.

The course we follow is a matter of profound consequence to many nations. If America wavers, the world will lose heart. If America leads, the world will show its courage. America will never waver; America will lead the world to peace. Our cause

is necessary; our cause is just. And no matter how long it takes, we will defeat the enemies of freedom.

In all that is to come, I know the graduates of the Citadel will bring credit to America, to the military, and to this great institution. In the words of your school song, you will go where you've always gone: "in the paths our fathers showed us Peace and Honor, God and Country, we will fight for thee."

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. in McAlister Field House. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. John S. Grinalds, USMC (Ret.), president, the Citadel; and Gov. Jim H. Hodges, Lt. Gov. Bob Peeler, Attorney General Charlie Condon, Adj. Gen. Stanhope S. Spears, and Speaker of the House of Representatives David H. Wilkins of South Carolina. He also referred to his September 23, 1999, Presidential campaign speech at the Citadel, entitled "A Period of Consequences."

Statement on the Congressional Conference Agreement on Education Reform Legislation *December 11, 2001*

The education of every child in America must always be a top priority. I commend the conferees for agreeing on a series of profound reforms to help provide our children the best education possible. I also thank the bipartisan leadership of the conference chair, Congressmen Boehner, as well as Senators Kennedy and Gregg and Congressman Miller, for taking major steps toward improving education throughout our country.

The conference agreement will ensure that no child in America is left behind, through historic education reforms based on real accountability, unprecedented flexibility for States and school districts, greater local control, more options for parents, and more funding for what works. I urge Members of the House and Senate to act soon and send me this legislation so that States and school districts can begin implementing these important reforms.